

Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools
Report submitted by: Head of Service Asset Management
Date: 9 March 2016

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
Chorley East; Chorley
North; Chorley Rural East;
Chorley Rural North;
Chorley Rural West; Chorley
South; Chorley West

The Provision of Additional Secondary School Places in Chorley

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Executive Summary

This report provides information on projected future pupil numbers in Chorley District secondary schools and the actions taken to secure additional places in order to meet future demand. The report seeks approval to expand one school with effect from 2017, and to enter into further negotiations with the remaining secondary schools to provide future additional places.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 25 has been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools is recommended to:

- (i) note the complexities of commissioning additional places in the secondary sector as set out in the report;
- (ii) approve the expansion of Holy Cross Catholic High School by 30 places per year group on a permanent basis with effect from September 2017, taking the published admission number from 165 to 195;
- (iii) note that officers will start to conduct further negotiations with secondary schools in the Chorley District to secure more additional places to deal with longer term demand; and

(iv) note the initial estimate of cost for delivering the one form of entry expansion project at Holy Cross Catholic High School.

Background and Advice

Since 2010, the local authority has commissioned around 3,000 additional school places, mainly in the primary sector, to deal with rising birth rates. This increase in births, coupled with large scale housing in some parts of the county, is now beginning to impact on the secondary sector across some districts to varying extents and according to varying timescales. Chorley District is the first district where the demand for places has begun to outstrip supply (as demonstrated by the provision of and subsequent filling of an additional form of entry in September 2015). A further increase in pupil numbers means that further remedial action is required to secure sufficient school places in the future.

The local authority has a significantly reduced scope to effectively commission additional secondary school places compared to its commissioning ability in the primary sector. The reasons for this are as follows:

- there are relatively few schools in scope within areas of demand compared to those in the primary sector;
 - of the reduced number of schools, a significant proportion will be voluntary aided; foundation; or academy, which are not subject to the local authority's commissioning powers;
 - the practical obstacles to expanding secondary schools are significant due to the siting of subject areas; core facilities that are not capable of dealing with a much increased pupil roll; and the costs of remodelling (which may be prohibitive) to address these issues.
- In addition;
- a number of secondary schools are on small sites that will not receive approval under section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to expand; and
 - the ability to commission new schools is restricted due to the size secondary schools need to be in order to operate successfully and offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

With regard to the last point, the local authority could, for instance, commission a one form entry primary school if this was considered to be the best solution locally to providing additional places. However, secondary schools generally need to be much larger to ensure their future viability and competitiveness. The local authority has not established a policy around the minimum size of secondary schools for commissioning purposes but it is suggested that new schools would ideally be 6 forms of entry or above (admission number 180), in order to have the flexibility to manage annual peaks and troughs in pupil numbers in the longer term. The need for additional secondary school places on this scale is only likely where there is housing development of sufficient scale to justify a new school. In all other instances, the local authority will be reliant on existing schools to provide the additional places.

Chorley District

The projections for the Chorley District secondary schools indicate that an additional form of entry will be required in Year 7 in September 2017. This is followed by years when the increased level of provision is sufficient.

Total Published Admissions Number (PAN)at January 2016: 1145

	Intake 2017	Intake 2018	Intake 2019	Intake 2020	Intake 2021	Intake 2022	Intake 2023	Intake 2024	Intake 2025
Without housing yield/ migration applied	1183	1182	1175	1242	1220	1300	1277	1289	1255
Potential shortfall	38	37	30	97	75	155	132	144	110
With Housing/ migration applied	1198	1197	1190	1257	1235	1315	1292	1304	1270
Potential shortfall	53	52	45	112	90	170	147	159	125

Whilst pupil projections beyond 2020 rely on a number of assumptions to be made in connection with the likely level of housing and migration which may come forward (projections use the district's 5 year housing land supply to estimate likely housing yield), projections based upon actual numbers in the primary sector show a shortfall of between 30 and 112 places by 2020. This equates to between 1 and 4 additional forms of entry (FE).

In the longer term, the need for between 75 and 155 places per year is sustained for future years (based upon numbers in the primary school sector), with the potential for additional housing (at current rates) and migration to increase this shortfall to between 90 and 170 places per intake year (between 3 and 5.5 FE).

Proposed Solution

In order to deal with the need for places in the medium term, officers asked for an additional form of entry to be provided across the Chorley District secondary schools for September 2017, made up from one or more of the existing schools expanding. Three schools came forward with expressions of interest. (However, on further investigation, one of the schools was not able to offer the full 30 places per year required.)

Officers spent time with all three schools to understand their curriculum model and how additional pupils would impact on accommodation needs. At the end of the process, the relative feasibility of expansion at each of the schools was considered and, based upon this data and comparison with the criteria for expansion published

within the 'Strategy for the Provision of School Places and Schools Capital Investment 2015/16 to 2017/18', a decision was made by the School Development Group that the most appropriate option for expansion for 2017 would be at Holy Cross Catholic High School.

Holy Cross Catholic High School governing body met on 28 September 2015 and agreed to a permanent increase in the school's admission number from 165 to 195 with effect from September 2017. Additional accommodation will be provided at the school to enable it to accommodate the additional pupils. Confirmation of the approval of the governors was received on 29 September 2015.

Holy Cross has a current Ofsted rating of 'Good' and the site and premises are capable of accommodating an expansion. The Liverpool Catholic Diocese has also provided evidence that there is an increased demand from children in the Catholic primary sector which helps to justify the expansion at this school.

Proposed Solution

It is proposed that the local authority proceeds with the one form entry expansion of Holy Cross Catholic High School, thus providing the additional places required for 2017. It is anticipated that this will provide sufficient places to accommodate demand until 2020.

With regard to the need for further additional places in Chorley for 2020 and beyond, the following mitigating factors need to be considered:

- just 91% of children in Chorley primary schools go on to attend secondary schools in Chorley. This rate has remained generally consistent for over 5 years;
- whilst the migration rate has been factored into the projections, it is clear that there is an established pattern of Chorley children attending secondary schools outside of the district, in particular the South Ribble schools;
- it is predicted that the South Ribble secondary schools, particularly those located along the Chorley border, will continue to have available places in Year 7 for the foreseeable future; and
- pupils will appeal for places at the most popular Chorley secondary schools and it is highly likely that some schools will need to take pupils in excess of their admission numbers through this process, particularly where some schools may have an admission number lower than the Indicated Admission Number suggested by their Net Capacity.

Therefore, it is proposed that the local authority now starts to scope available solutions for the provision of the additional places required for 2020 and beyond, starting with a meeting with the Head teachers and Chairs of Governors of the Chorley District secondary schools to open up a debate as to how the longer term need for places will be met.

There are six secondary schools in Chorley: one community school; one voluntary aided catholic school and four academies. Therefore, a negotiated and agreed

solution to providing the additional places is needed, due to the local authority's restricted commissioning powers in the District.

Consultation

Expressions of interest were requested from all Chorley District secondary schools and meetings were held with the three schools that came forward through this process.

Statutory consultation is not required in order to expand Holy Cross Catholic High School by 30 places per year. Statutory consultation is only required where a school is to expand by more than 30 pupils and 25% or 200 pupils (whichever is lesser) of its original size. The proposed expansion of Holy Cross represents a 12.72% expansion. Typically in these situations, the school in question may run an informal consultation with parents and interested parties but this is a matter for the school to consider.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Legal

The local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure the provision of sufficient high quality school places. Projections indicate that there will be a need for additional secondary school places in the Chorley District in the foreseeable future and the proposed expansion of Holy Cross Catholic High School is a step in providing for this need.

Financial

The Capital Strategy for Schools 2015/16 - 2017/18 approved by the Cabinet Member on 5th November 2015, proposed that some of the Basic Need Allocation 15/16 – 17/18 be used to provide additional secondary school places in Chorley. The estimated cost of a one form entry expansion at Holy Cross can be met from this allocation.

Officers have had some initial meetings with the school and an outline brief has been developed to meet the 1FE accommodation requirements. The cost associated with these initial proposals is estimated to be in the region of £3.3m.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools - 'Capital Strategy for Schools 2015/16 to	5 November 2015	Joanne Mills, Office of the Chief Executive, 534284

2017/18'

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A